

Perfins of France

by Jan Prins

(a reprint, in revised format, of an earlier article by Mr. Prins)

Perfins were authorized for use in France by a ministerial decree of November 15, 1876, about eight years following their original introduction in England. This authorization was revoked in a decision published January 21, 1955, so authentic French Perfins cannot be found on stamps since about that time.

Compared with the approximately 7,000 types to be found on each of the United States and Great Britain, just under 2,500 types have been reported for France. However, since French Perfins have been studied less intensively, many new types are sure to turn up. Most French Perfins are made with a die having a single head (U. S. machines usually have 5 or 10). Often, blocks of stamps are folded to get several stamps perforated at one time. This results in tete beche and irregular positioning of the impression (Figure 1).

There are some interesting features of French Perfins as a result of political changes. Figure 2 shows a pre-World War I German stamp used in Strassburg, then a part of Germany; and the same Perfin used on a French stamp after the city became part of France and had its name changed to Strasbourg. The process was repeated in World War II, as shown in Figure 3.

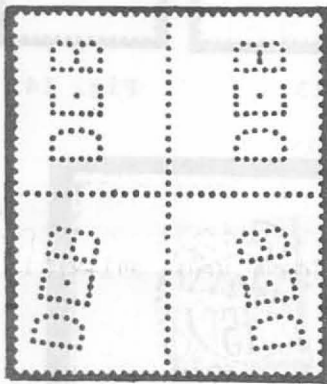


Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3

Figure 4 shows the Perfin of the bank, Credit Lyonnais, used abroad in Cairo. The Credit Lyonnais Perfin (Figure 5, has more than 30 varieties, used in various branches. Figure 6 shows the "BEM" Perfin of the Banque d'Etat du Maroc, used in French Morocco.

Figure 7 shows a monograph, the "JZC" of J. Zuber and Company. Figure 8 shows the Perfin of Titania Chocolat Vinay.



Fig. 4

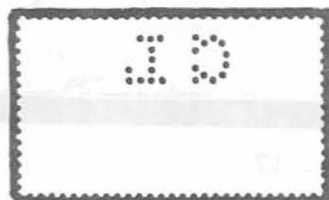


Fig. 5



Fig. 6



Fig. 7



Fig. 8

Figures 9 through 13 (next page) show some of the fancy Perfins used by various French firms: Figure 9 is the cross of the Ligue des Soci-

(continued on Page 4)

etes de Croix-Rouge, Figure 10 a millwheel, Figure 11 the cow of Chocolat Vinay, Figure 12 a bird or weathercock, and Figure 13 an elephant.

The letter "S" shown in Figure 14 has semi-official status, having been used by the French Senate from about 1933 until the German invasion of 1940. Figure 15 shows a Perfin, "WP", used briefly in 1940 by a unit of the Polish Army.

Three philatelic expositions have used Perfins. The first, Scott C6a, E.I.P.A., is well known and listed in all the catalogs. In addition, there is the one shown in Figure 16, used at the Exposition Philatelique de Nancy in 1942, and another, "EXP / PS", used at the Exposition Philatelique de Samur in 1943.

One of the earliest known covers bearing a French Perfin is seen in Figure 17.



Fig. 9



Fig. 10



Fig. 11



Fig. 12

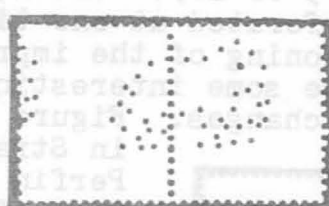


Fig. 13



Fig. 14



Fig. 15



Fig. 16

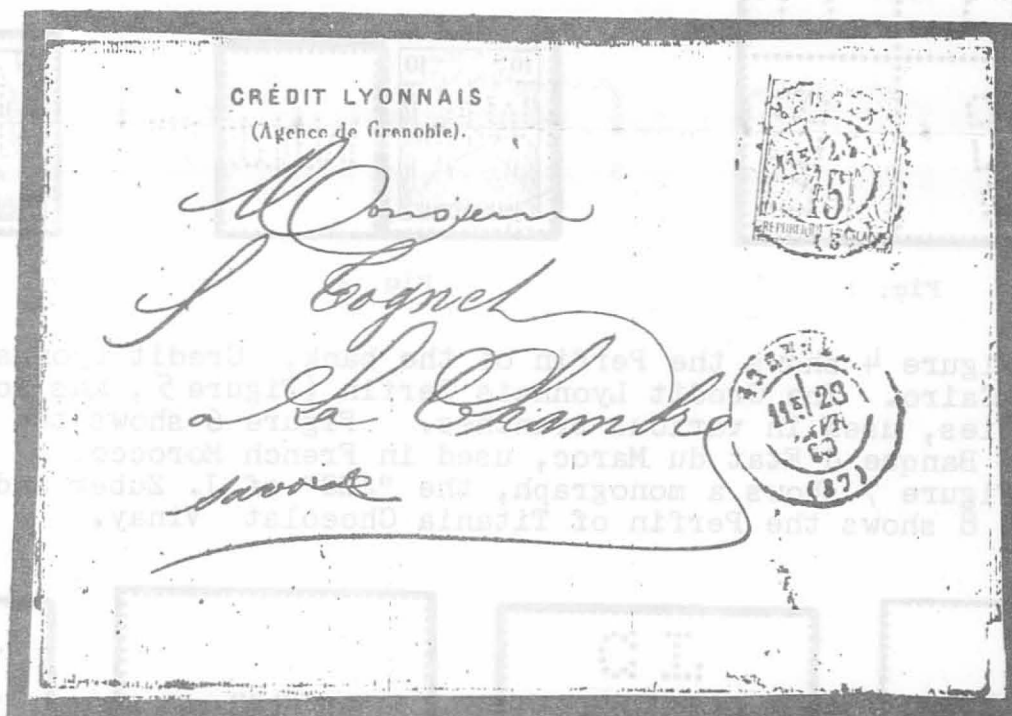
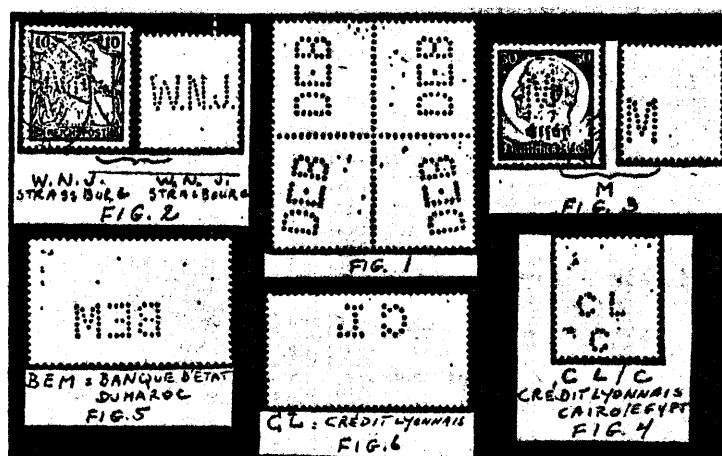


Fig. 17

A serial listing of Perfins appeared in Le Monde des Philatelistes and was subsequently issued in booklet form. Subsequently, the same publication serialized almost as many additions. It is hoped that these, too, will be made available in collected form.



Selected examples of French perfins.

The Perfins Of France

Jan C. Prins

Perfins were authorized for use in France by a ministerial decree of November 15, 1876, about eight years following their original introduction in England. This authorization was revoked in a decision published January 21, 1955 so authentic French perfins cannot be found on stamps since about that time.

Compared with the approximately 7000 types to be found on each of the United States and Great Britain, just under 2500 types have been reported for France but, since French perfins have been studied less intensively, many new types are sure to be discovered.

Most French perfins are made with a die having a single head (U.S. machines usually have five or ten). Often blocks of stamps are folded to get several stamps perforated at one time. This results in tete-beche and irregular positioning of the impression (Fig. 1).

There are some interesting features of French perfins as a result of political changes: Fig. 2 shows a pre-WW I German stamp used in Strassburg and the same perfin used on a French stamp used from Strasbourg.

The process was repeated in WW II as shown in Fig. 3. Figures 4 and 5 show French perfins used abroad and in a colony.

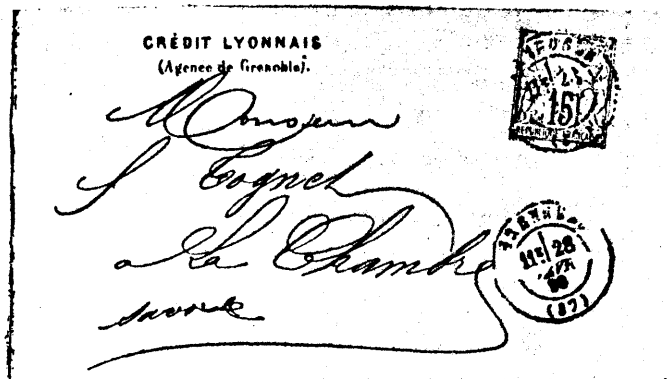
Figure 6 shows one of the many types of perfin used by a French bank. Each branch had one of the more than 30 variations of the letters "CL".

Numerous fancy types exist which make interesting displays, while others have interesting backgrounds. The letter "S" has semi-official status, having been used by the French Senate from about 1933 until the invasion of 1940.

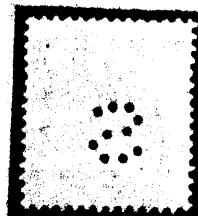
In addition, there is the one used at the Exposition Philatelique de Nancy in 1942 and another, EXP / P.S. used at the Exposition Philatelique de Samur in 1943.

"WP" was used briefly in 1940 by a unit of the Polish Army, and one of the earliest known covers bearing a French perfin bears the postmark of February 28, 1880.

A serial listing of Perfins appeared in "Le Monde des Philatelistes" and was later issued in booklet form. Subsequently the same publication serialized almost as many additions. It is hoped that these too will be made available in collected form.



Triangle—Credit Lyonnais—Grenoble. Date: February 28, 1880.



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